

Village of Lansing

Planning Board Meeting

October 11, 1999

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Hickey. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Brown, Halevy, Klepack, Waterman, Village Attorney Marcus, Code Enforcement Officer Curtis and Village Engineer Cross.

Public Comment

Waterman moved to close the Public Comment portion of the meeting as there was no one present who wished to speak. Seconded by Klepack. All in favor.

Planning Consultant Decision

The Board reviewed a memo from Carol Klepack regarding the Planning consultant interviews. They decided to invite Saratoga Associates back in order to interview Lisa Nagle, who would work on this project if this firm were chosen. They also decided to invite Environmental Design Research back because David Crandall from that firm did not have adequate time during the first interview. They will invite both groups back on Wednesday, October 20th, and will vote on October 26th.

Hickey moved that the Board have a special meeting on October 20th for the purpose of interviewing consultants. Klepack seconded. All in favor.

Klepack said that she will ask for references for Trowbridge as none were listed. She will also call more of Saratoga Associate's references. .

Traffic Calming - Brown

Doris Brown has researched traffic calming strategies and reported that there are a number of things the Village could do and other things that can be done at the County level, such as ride share programs. She feels that a committee is a good idea to keep looking at the tremendous amount of material available on this issue to come up with recommendations of what the Village can do and what we would need from other municipalities. She does not feel that a Park-and-Ride program would be useful in the Village but further north in Lansing it might be advantageous. There are a lot of things that have been tested and a lot of grants available.

Special Permit #1466, Pyramid Company of Ithaca

Jim Tull presented an initial Landscaping Plan that listed the plantings they will use. The landscaping will be in keeping with what they have done in the past. The plan shows the parking lot islands planted with trees. Flowering crab trees will be used a lot as well as ash and spruce. On the grade change in the front and back, they will plant a row of spruce trees to delineate the lots, and there will be Flowering Crab trees up against the building. In the front they expect to use the same scheme that they are using around the Bon Ton - a mix of junipers, crabapples, and some spruce. In the rear of the building they will take the retention pond and turn it 90 degrees and lengthen it to increase runoff capacity.

He said that there has been some discussion about putting in a sidewalk or walking trail along the north end of the property, and they do have some flexibility there and will look into doing this. They have already talked to the YMCA about putting in some kind of connection to the YMCA parking lot.

The berm on the southeast corner of the mall currently has the least amount of trees. This berm is a 10 foot higher elevation than the lot and around 2 feet higher elevation than Route 13. There has been concern to keep that berm in place, and Tull does not see a problem with keeping those elevation approximately the same. Hickey suggested that

they look at 8-10 foot trees instead of 7-8 foot trees to better match the existing trees. Tull said they will move 156 ornamental trees and will add 55 trees.

Hickey asked that the Board be given a construction phase schedule as the construction will take place over a two-year period.

Cross asked about the depth of field of the parking lot in front of the stores. Tull said that the majority of the lots will not have the longer aisles.

The Lighting Plan will have to go before the Lighting Commission when it is ready.

Hickey reported that the Sear-Brown Group traffic consultants had just received Mr. Napoleon's report and will submit their report on Mr. Napoleon's report as soon as they have a chance to review it. The report that the Board received last week from the Sears Brown Group dealt only with the key points for the Tops review. They did not get Mr. Napoleon's report in time to review it before this meeting.

Mr. Napoleon reviewed his report for the Board. His report is based on the expectation of Pyramid Mall expansion as well as construction of the Tops shopping center. He looked at Triphammer Road between Graham Road and the northbound ramp at Route 13. He started with the Creighton Manning counts from earlier this year. Counts have been done twice this year, in 1976, and at various different times throughout the years. The most recent volumes were counted by Creighton Manning in August, not while school was open. However, the volumes were almost identical to those that were counted when school was in session in February, as well as counts taken in September, 1976. So Mr. Napoleon said he had no reason to question the validity of those traffic counts. He started with those and expanded to the year 2001 for traffic volumes, using an expansion factor of 2% as did Creighton Manning. Again the NEST study seems to show that expansion range is more likely to be 1.5%, but 2% gives a higher confidence level. He performed the Highway Capacity Software Analysis for the various intersections involved to use as a yardstick. He then used the same procedure to estimate how things are operating today and how they will operate in the year 2001, if neither of these proposal comes to fruition. He then looked at what happens if Pyramid Mall expands and then looked at what happens in the year 2001 if the mall expands and the Tops shopping center are both built and operating. He did a traffic generation study which gives us a best estimate of how things will actually work. Using these capacity analyses as a yardstick, he is simply comparing one to the other. He found that in the year 2001 during the weekday afternoon peak hour and during the Saturday peak hour, the Graham Road intersection is at failure. The other intersections, Catherwood, Pyramid Drive, and Route 13 north and southbound ramps are functional. On Route 13 northbound ramp onto Triphammer Road there is a C Level of Service. That is where an advance left turn light will be installed to go north.

Hickey pointed out that Creighton Manning has already predicted the Graham Road intersection as an F level right now. There is a wide discrepancy between these predicted Levels of Service. Napoleon explained that Level of Service is a measure of the delay. Another criteria is called Volume-to-Capacity Ratio, or how much traffic is predicted compared to how much traffic the intersection or road could actually handle. What does not show here is the fact that even though the delays are not that bad, the Volume-to-Capacity Ratio is very high -.97-.98. The average delay to all the vehicles using the intersection is in the range of 20-25 seconds. Napoleon said that if the timing of the light is changed, the Level of Service will change. Hickey said that they are now in discussions with New York State DOT as to whether or not we can put a left-hand turn arrow on that light. Mr. Napoleon said that his report assumes the need for a turn signal at that light. This is a pre-existing condition prior to any future development taking place.

Level of Service ratings define how much delay is actually going to be incurred: Level A: 5 seconds or less; B: 15 seconds; C: 15-25 seconds; D 25-40 seconds; E: 40-60 seconds; F anything longer than 60 seconds.

Napoleon recommends that Graham Road needs a traffic signal and the Route 13 northbound ramp needs another phase on the signal today, no less with any expansion of the Village in the future.

Napoleon said that the formal definition of a shopping center as far as the ITE is concerned is a "multiple-use

development where there are at least 3 distinct principal land uses," for example a department store, an auto repair facility and a restaurant. If all 3 are on the same land and served by same driveways and the same parking facilities, it is considered a shopping center. He considered the Tops development a shopping center for his analysis because it fits that definition. He looked the effect of these developments on Triphammer Road. He considered where that development is located and the fact that it is served exclusively by Pyramid Drive for trip generation purposes. He looked at what Pyramid Mall is generating, and what he can expect the new expansion of Pyramid Mall will generate, and what he can expect Tops will add on top of both those things. He looked at the volumes of traffic that had been using Pyramid Drive throughout fairly recent history. In 1976 a total of 653 were counted in weekday PM on Pyramid Drive only. In 1999, the number is 761 cars.

In 1976, when Pyramid Mall was first being built there were traffic studies done which projected there would be 1348 vehicles per hour on Pyramid Drive during the weekday peak period by 1979. These projections were made in 1976 and projected to 1979, and even though the size of the mall has increased through the years, we have never come close to the volume that was projected back in 1976. Napoleon said he found volumes consistently lower than would have been projected when the mall was first being built.

Hickey said that according to the most recent counts, on peak days 36% of the traffic going into the mall uses Graham Road, about 6% uses Catherwood Road and the balance, 58%, uses Pyramid Drive

Napoleon said he looked at the total volume going in and out of Pyramid Mall - all the traffic entering and leaving all the entrances during both Saturday peak and weekday PM peak and calculated what the ITE would predict. He found that ITE predictions were significantly higher volumes than what we were actually experiencing at the mall. He felt that the reasons were because the Village is isolated and surrounded by larger cities such as Binghamton, Syracuse and the Corning/Elmira area, with larger shopping facilities. These larger metropolitan area facilities form a ring that caps off the market that can be captured at any shopping facility in the Ithaca. He compared statistics for Pyramid Mall to Carousel Mall in Syracuse which is approximately three times the size of Pyramid Mall. In Lansing, 52% or better travel less than 5 miles to get here. In Syracuse, only 35% travel less than 5 miles. Over 11% of the patrons of Carousel Mall have traveled over 50 miles to get there. Here 94% have traveled 25 miles or less to get to Lansing. There's a limit to how far people are willing to travel to come here. Looking at the average time spent shopping, it's almost 50% more in Carousel Mall. People spent 1.5 times more time shopping in Carousel Mall than here. People are not shopping more at in Carousel Mall, they are staying there longer. We have a captive audience here. People are using Pyramid Mall for their local shopping, but may go to the larger areas for Christmas shopping.

Napoleon measured at peak hour 1,496 vehicles per hour, in plus out, all entrances. He looked at the volume total in and out traffic, size of the mall, occupied square footage (443, 000 s.f. gross leased area) and came up with a curve to be compared to the ITE curve. He found that Pyramid Mall year after year has generated less traffic than the ITE has predicted by the curve or by the average. We're lower than the ITE curve would predict but we're well within the average, or realm of believable data.

Napoleon did not feel a traffic light was necessary on Pyramid Drive at this time because it doesn't meet any of the warrants for traffic signalization according to the New York State Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Hickey asked if the stacking of northbound traffic onto Route 13 to make a left hand turn has been taken into account. Napoleon recommends that dual left hand turn lanes be made by moving the painted lines on the bridge, but Hickey said that the State has already turned that proposal down. Napoleon's other suggestion is to install the third phase on the traffic signal there. His analysis shows that the Volume-to-Capacity Ratio would plummet and the Level of Service would improve. You can approach that light from Triphammer Road south, Triphammer Road north or the ramp from Route 13. He would have the light give each of those 3 approaches a green at 3 different times

Napoleon thinks there will be a distinct pattern for how people use both Tops and Pyramid Mall. He feels that the bulk of traffic going down Pyramid Drive will go straight into the mall first, and in leaving the mall will make a right hand turn into Tops, and then in leaving Tops will make a right turn out onto Pyramid Drive. The Level of Service on the Route 13 northbound ramps with the mall and Tops built will be F and the Graham Road intersection will be an F. There will be failures at both ends of the study area. If the improvements that are recommended for Triphammer Road

are made, and the southern signal phasing is split, we get a close C Level of Service and reasonable Volume-to-Capacity ratios and workable weekday peak hours and Saturdays at Graham Road.

To summarize, Mr. Napoleon concluded that Graham Road needs a signal, Catherwood is okay and will stay okay, and Pyramid Drive will be operating close to its capacity but will not need any major work at this time. It does need work on the existing signal, but it will not at this time require the additional signal. He said that he does not recommend an additional light because a basic premise of traffic engineering is that minimum control is the best control.

At the southbound signals the signal will continue to function as it does now with the development of both proposed projects. Hickey noted that this is not the same conclusion as reached by Creighton Manning. Napoleon did not feel that we need a 5 lane bridge at this time. The final recommendation is for the Village to follow through with the plans to widen Triphammer Road.

Hickey said once the Board is satisfied with the traffic issue, the SEQRA can be completed and then they can move on to the Special Permit process. Cross said that the preliminary drainage study is acceptable, but it's not a final report. It needs to have engineering information added to it.

Tops Special Permit, Continued Discussion

The Tops developers showed a rendering of what the proposed retail space will look like, and said that the changes discussed previously have now been made and will be presented by Frank Santelli of T.G. Millers. Tops' traffic projections predict that there will be 650 trips per hour on Pyramid Drive during the peak hours of the week and almost 800 on Saturday. These figures are larger than those projected by Mr. Napoleon.

Tops asked that the Board review the SEQRA at this meeting and give a conditional approval. They met with the DOT last week in regard to the DOT comments that the Board received last week and the Board's own comments. John Tozzi has responded to those concerns.

Frank Santelli presented the changes in the site plan. He said that a concrete walkway has been added along the full length of Pyramid Drive, with 10 feet between the walkway and the curb. Trees have been extended down the south side of the building. A bike rack is shown under main canopy. There are two different alternative lighting plans. The dumpster is shown. Landscaping changes are shown - the addition of 4 trees and identification of the existing trees along Pyramid Drive.

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed the improvements that would be necessary for the Tops development to occur - the installation of the Graham Road light and the left hand turn signal at the Route 13 ramp, and any modifications that the State DOT may require for the other bridge lights and those adjacent at Pyramid Drive and the Triphammer Mall entrance. Tops has agreed to pay for and install those.

The DOT had asked Tops for a simulation of the corridor, which they prepared and the DOT reviewed. The question came up whether or not this is a combined or separate development. Top said they are separate permits. The DOT sent a traffic engineer out to look at the 4 traffic signals and advised Tops that they would need to upgrade that equipment if we were going to coordinate all these traffic signals - on the south side of the bridge, on the north side of the bridge, and two at the bridge. The end result was that they needed a hardwire interconnect and signal improvements to implement their coordination plan. That has been relayed to Tops and they are working with the DOT right now to get that implemented as part of the Tops approval. Tonight Tops is looking for conditional approval based on their working with the DOT to get those 4 signals talking to each other. This includes the hot wire from the signal that Tops proposed to put up on Pyramid Drive. The DOT said that would also have to be connected to the 4 signals.

Hickey pointed out that Mr. Napoleon had not felt an additional signal was necessary on Pyramid Drive. Pat said that when you look at signal warrants you look at side street traffic volume vs. the main line traffic volume. They felt that the easternmost Tops driveway meets warrant no. 1 for minimum vehicular volume. He said that a lot of that traffic is right turn traffic out of Tops and that is perhaps why it was felt a light may not be needed. However it may be needed because of the benefit of having a signal for a left turn into the Tops driveway from Pyramid Drive because that would also be controlled by the signal. Hickey noted that when Tops put in the store on Meadow Street they did not put up a

traffic light at the initial stage but did later have to put one up. Hickey asked if it would be possible to put one up but not use it until it has been demonstrated that the traffic volume warranted it.

Cross distributed his engineering report to the Board:

1. Drainage: the drainage plan is a complete submittal. The expectation is that the new development, including all new impervious surfaces, will handle storm water at the same rate or less than the existing site. This should be accomplished upon completion of the project.

2. Traffic. Has been discussed.

3. Dumpster

4 Lighting

5. Cross has not yet received a calculation to confirm or predict the 27 units of sewer.

The Board finished the SEQRA review.

- Page 6: One small to moderate impact and can be mitigated.
- Page 7: Yes, potentially large impact because of increase of about 42% impervious surface. Impact can be mitigated.
- Other impacts: "Impervious surface will be increased by 42% resulting from increased parking areas and building footprints. The additional storm water runoff will be detained on site in two detention basins. Each basin will be sized to accommodate runoff resulting from 2 year, 10 year, and 100 year storm occurrences and discharge to existing tributaries will be controlled so as not to exceed peak rate runoffs released from the site during predevelopment conditions. Erosion and sedimentation will be controlled during construction through the use of perimeter silt fencing, temporary diversion swales, and top soiling and seeding of basins. Stormwater management plan has been approved by Village Engineer."
- Page 9: Impact on open spaces is small to moderate so doesn't need to be mitigated.
- Impact on Transportation. Yes, potentially large impact which can be mitigated.
- Other impacts: "Intersection at Graham Road and N. Triphammer Road currently has a level of service Grade of F. Similarly the left turn at the intersection of the Route 13 Northbound ramp and N. Triphammer Road (south signal) fails. Both of these conditions will be rectified so that level of service grade will be corrected before developer will receive a Certificate of Occupancy from the Village of Lansing."

Waterman said that she was very uncomfortable with the conflicting traffic reports and would like more information before she votes on this. Hickey pointed out that the Sears Brown has been given the Creighton Manning report, the initial report from Mr. Napoleon, the comments from New York State and the letter from Mayor Cohen to analyze objectively. Sears Brown has given the Board a letter which lists what will be in the final report, and they say that based on the analysis provided, the proposed development(s) will have no notable effects on traffic volumes or operations of the N. Triphammer Road/Oakcrest Road intersection or the N. Triphammer Road/Catherwood Road intersection. They also say that the Tops signal along Pyramid Drive may not be necessary. The Board does not yet know what Sears Brown will say about Mr. Napoleon's lower numbers for Pyramid. If the Board moves on this, conditions will be set that the drainage plan has final approval by the Village the lights at Graham Road and on the bridge must be operational and before occupancy .

- Impact on Neighborhood: Small impact.
- Other impacts "Need for sidewalks."
- Is there likely to be public controversy related to environmental impacts.? Yes.

"The conversion of a failed Howard Johnson motel to a Tops shopping center has generated public concern regarding increased traffic generation on both NYS Route 13 and N. Triphammer Road. Several traffic studies have concluded that there currently exists a level of service failure at two locations on N. Triphammer Road that

must be corrected before any additional development may occur. Since both of these roadways service adjacent municipalities, there may be regional consequences of this development. The corrective action required, a new traffic signal at one intersection and a modification to the signal at the other will immediately raise the level of service grade to an acceptable one, will improve conditions along N. Triphammer Road. N. Triphammer Road is scheduled to undergo reconstruction in 2001 and 2002 which will result in further long-term improvements of the roadway."

Halevy moved that the Board find that the project will not result in any large and important impacts and therefore is one which will not have a significant impact on the environment. Klepack seconded.

4 in favor. Waterman abstained. Negative declaration.

Hickey then moved on to General Conditions A through J required for all Special Permits. Waterman again expressed concern about concluding that the development would not endanger public safety or that the street system can handle expected traffic until she had had the opportunity to review Sear-Brown's full report. Klepack shared this concern. Drainage will not be adversely affected because the Village Engineer must approve the final drainage plan as meeting the Village's standards. Halevy moved that the proposal meets General Conditions A through J, seconded by Brown. Three in favor with Klepack and Waterman abstaining for the reason noted above.

Hickey then asked for a motion on approval of the Special Permit with the conditions noted in the SEQRA review concerning drainage and traffic, implementation of the landscape plan, and approval of the lighting plan by the Lighting Commission. Moved by Halevy, seconded by Brown. Three in favor with Klepack and Waterman abstaining for the reason noted above.

Curtis noted that the County's 239 determination that this project may have deleterious impacts necessitated a minimum 4 – 1 super majority by the Village Planning Board to approve it. Therefore the 3 – 2 vote actually meant that the motion had failed and the Special Permit was not approved.

Adjourn

The hour being late Waterman moved to adjourn at 10:55, seconded by Halevy. All in favor.